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THE SPECTATOR VERITAS ET INTEGRITAS MDCCCXLVIII

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Publishing the Truth, From Good Motives and For Justifiable Ends

Loss of ESOL undercuts multilingual international student support and space

by Anne Rong '24
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

When Christa Ingabire '24 arrived on the Hill from Burundi as a first-year, her first written assignment was a paper on utilitarianism. Like the rest of her class, she visited the Writing Center. "I had really good ideas," she recalls, "but I knew I had grammar mistakes." However, her tutor's only feedback was that "everything's fine," says Ingabire. "I knew that obviously not everything was fine, [as English] is not my first language and this was my first paper in English." Unsatisfied, she turned to the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program and made an appointment with former Program Director Barbara Britt-Hysell. Ingabire spent three hours with Hysell and learned there that "80% of [her] essay was actually mistakes."

Hysell retired in June 2021 after seventeen years at Hamilton, and ESOL has since been discontinued in her absence. Today, the Writing Center and the Oral Communication Center (OCC), led respectively by Directors Jennifer Ambrose and Amy Gaffney, offer the only source of multilingual support. In Fall 2021, Alex Hanson joined them as Multilingual Student Support Coordinator and Assistant Director to the Writing Center and OCC. The Dean of Students Office is also in the final stages of hiring a new Dean of International Student Services.

Despite these additions, multilingual international students have expressed frustration about the discontinuation of the ESOL program. For Lebanese international student Maroun Mehzer '24, ESOL was "the only place where we actually felt comfortable being internationals without putting any filters on, really. And that's just gone. There's nothing that replaced it."

Mezher adds that "the whole point behind ESOL was 70% the social aspect and 30% the academic part of it." By virtue of Hysell's students being predominantly international students, ESOL had become the international student social space. After his first year, Ghanaian international student Christopher Akuleme '23 no longer used ESOL for papers, but "to broaden the network of other international students that I knew," he says. Chiara Bondi '22, an Italian and Spanish international student, adds that "Ms. Hysell always made sure that the international students had somewhere to be," which was Hysell's office, formerly in KJ across from the OCC. To them, with ESOL gone, so too is the international student social space.

Official & Unofficial Roles of ESOL

The ESOL program was established in 2004 as an academic multilingual resource center. It provided two non-required courses—ESOL 101W: American Academic Essay and ESOL 102W: Etymology of American Social Movements. In ESOL 101W, Hysell taught basic conventions and processes of American academic writing, which Bondi valued because she says she had "no idea how to write a college paper in English." ESOL 102W invited different lecturers from various departments to discuss critical American social movements, which contextualized "obvious" American knowledge for Bondi. ESOL also offered academic tutoring from Hysell and her professional tutors. Many multilingual international students used it extensively.

Hysell's interactions with students extended beyond ESOL. Akuleme '23 says that his and

PHOTO COURTSEY OF JIIN JEONG '21

International students at "Casa de Hysell."

many other international students' "first sense of community here" were the dinner parties and cookouts Hysell hosted at her house. Her students call it "Casa de Hysell." International students lived with her, spent breaks with her and some stayed with her for some time after they graduated. Hysell says that "anything anybody needed, I would just say yes...that's what the kids liked," she underscores, "that I had their backs… from taking kids to the hospital, to the airport, to lawyers, everything."

Lack of Respect/Support for ESOL

Going to ESOL "was a very clear 'I am not from here' sign," Bondi admits. To Chinese international student Lesley Lu '24, the student body assumes that everyone's first or preferred language is English, and being vocal about ESOL "finally exposes your identity" to native English-speaking, American peers. Hysell also says that some professors had "less respect for me" due to her seemingly unlimited availability to her students. "Professors would say, 'Oh, Britt, she's just so sweet. She's like everybody's mother'... I'm a professional instructor." Hysell would respond, "I'm just a compassionate person." She contends that the lack of respect some faculty had for her resulted in a disrespect for ESOL as a whole. For many multilingual international students and much of the Hamilton community, Hysell and ESOL were fundamentally tied.

At the same time, the need for Hysell's exceeding support felt exacerbated by the fact that Assistant Dean of Students for International Students and Accessibility Allen Harrison had a dual responsibility. As Associate Dean of Students for International Students and for Accessibility, he is responsible for both international students and students with accessibility needs. The nature of his two responsibilities meant that he had little capacity to support ESOL. Dean Harrison says himself that he wore "two very, very big hats… I really don't have any input into ESOL or multilingual operations on our campus." Keshav Rai '23, an international student from India and the U.K., recalls that Hysell often had to "pick up his slack in her little half-side of the ESOL department, too."

External Review and Hysell Retires

In Fall 2020, ESOL underwent external review. External reviews are routine for resource centers and offer an "objective view," Hanson states, which Gaffney explains as taking "a holistic look… of what this resource or program is, what they do, what they offer, who they serve, what resources they have, what re-

sources they want." This review was conducted by individuals unaffiliated with Hamilton College so they are "not invested in any one particular outcome," said Gaffney. Though its findings are not publicly available, Gaffney says that it prompted a "transition to a different model."

Hysell was displeased with how the review was conducted. Hamilton, because it had ESOL, was the only NESCAC school with a separate program for multilingual writers. The two external reviewers were from other NESCAC schools, and though they allegedly sang praises about ESOL to Hysell directly, she says these praises were absent in the actual review. *The Spectator* was unable to access a copy of this review.

Hysell questions whether the external reviewers ever read her annual reports. "They didn't come out with a firm statement saying this program should continue," she notes. The "wheels were already turning" for ESOL's dissolution before her retirement, Hysell adds, and she wonders why "the directors [felt] it necessary to replace rather than collaborate with the ESOL program" following the review.

When any position opens, "there's not necessarily a guarantee that it's going to get replaced one-to-one," says Gaffney. According to Associate Professor of German and Russian Languages and Literatures (Russian) John Bartle, the ESOL Program Committee recommended that her position be renewed. Bartle is a member of this committee. Tunisian international student Yassine Dhouib '24 thought the search for Hysell's successor would be unrealistic. "There'll always be that person who was extra gentle, extra nice. You wish everyone was like that but I don't think it's even structurally possible," Dhouib says. Gaffney states that the administration decided not to replace Hysell directly, but to "move the academic support to fall under the two existing centers… and hire someone whose expertise is specifically in supporting multilingual students, which is Alex Hanson."

Transitioning Multilingual Support to the Writing Center and OCC

Transitions away from ESOL began in Summer 2021 when Hanson added a new multilingual training session into the Writing Center and OCC tutors' general training. According to Writing Center tutor Cass Adler '24, the multilingual training was only "around an hour, and hour and a half" of the multi-day general training. Bondi, an OCC tutor, and Writing Center tutor Grace Goldberg '24 gave the same estimate. The new training instructed tutors to "be comfortable in giving [a] direct answer to multilingual students' questions," says Hanson. Writing Center tutors discussed sample papers, and OCC tutors discussed student presentation videos. Goldberg remembers a second, two-hour long presentation on Sept. 28 concerning moreso "the specific things to do in specific circumstances."

However, student tutors still struggle to offer direct answers. "Tutors don't want to offend anyone," says Bondi. "I don't want to tell people 'your accent is too thick' or 'your grammar is not good,'" but "when you're presenting your thesis," she adds, "professors might actually grade you on grammatical correctness." "What am I supposed to cater to," Adler asks, when "professors often look for something much more like what a native English speaker would write, but I personally don't want to change their voice?"

Hanson's approach to training is "adequate" for Adler in that the Writing Center "isn't really for tutoring one particular student from the beginning to the end of their years at Hamilton." Yet, Adler, Bondi and Goldberg want more training, and because tutors like Bondi feel "a lot of fear" in giving direct answers, multilingual international students have widely mixed experiences and opinions on the centers' academic credibility.

Additionally, while ESOL's multilingual tutoring responsibilities moved to the Writing Center and the OCC, there is no substitute for courses ESOL used to offer. "If [those classes] were under literally any other department," Bondi argues, "so many more students would take it. But because it was specifically under ESOL, it was completely neglected." Professor Bartle, previous instructor of ESOL 102 from 2010-2014, says that the loss of these courses is "what to me is the saddest." As far as he knows, no one intends to continue teaching them. "They'll brag about writing," Hysell adds, "but they're not teaching."

Student Experiences with ESOL, Writing Center and OCC

Professor Bartle observed the depth and flexibility of ESOL tutoring, which could last "10 or 15 minutes working on a very specific issue… [to] two or three hours." The Writing Center and OCC are more rigid: appointments are an hour long and students can only sign up for one appointment a day on TutorTrac during exam seasons "out of fairness to all students," says Ambrose. Lu feels "the point" of the one-appointment-a-day rule was that "I shouldn't go past their system and directly ask for help." Chinese international student Raio Huang '24 also finds it more efficient to work for a longer time with a tutor at ESOL than "a scattered amount of small pieces of time" through different appointments over several days. On the other hand, there are multilingual international students like Dhouib who have preferred the Writing Center and OCC because "those long meetings… would be too much for me," says Dhouib.

Historically, ESOL employed up to six professional tutors, yet there were only two professional tutors in the program's final two years. Dhouib feels that the plethora of student tutors is an advantage of the Writing Center and OCC. By alternating between many student tutors that each "brought something new to the table… I learned from different people who major in different things," he says. Dhouib also values the probability that the tutor themselves took a class with the professor he is writing for. "Hysell's tutoring was useful," says Lu, "but she doesn't know the specific subject you're writing on. That's all on you."

For Gaffney and Ambrose, their tutors gain from tutoring students as well. "It makes tutors more well-rounded as students too," Gaffney notes. She continues, "I have philosophy or classics or government majors who love that they know a bit about [other subjects] because they've tutored multiple appointments about them." Student tutors get a "broader view" of the curriculum and the student community, and bring that into future appointments in a positive cycle.

Hysell disagrees with Gaffney's sentiment: "it's upsetting that they're more concerned with their tutors than they are with the tutees." She argues that to "give tutors experience" has no place as the focus of any academic program "in terms of equity." "How many of them are going to become professional tutors," Hysell asks, "the work of students is in jeopardy so that a peer tutor can have an experience working with a diverse, multilingual student?"

Even with the specificity that dozens of student tutors offer and their new multilingual training, many tutees still feel that their feedback is lacking. Not only did Mehzer feel his Writing Center comments were not as "extensive" as Hysell's, but they were "passive," such as "'don't use this word,' instead of 'this isn't the right way to present an argument.'" After Huang's first OCC appointment, he knew they prioritized "trying to be polite" over "being helpful." Lu, a Writing Center frequenter before and after ESOL's dissolution, estimated that only 50% of Writing Center tutors gave her valuable advice. "That's an optimistic estimate," she adds.

Huang owes the unhelpful feedback to the social pressure of tutors themselves being students. "We see each other every day, so they try to be polite in that setting so we don't be really awkward in the future," says Huang. Mezher is also uncomfortable with student tutors because he feels they judge him "for my skills which are subpar to what they write." For him, being the same age but with different English capabilities amplifies the disparity. "When I'm interacting with people my age and they tell me 'don't say that in English' or 'you have an accent' daily for five years," he wonders, "will the next person judge me and tell me something about my English? It's a self-reinforcing mechanism… if I'm being judged for simple everyday conversation, what if I'm presenting something academic?" Hysell explains that within ESOL, "for many of the students, there's that confidentiality that was there in our relationship. No judgment."

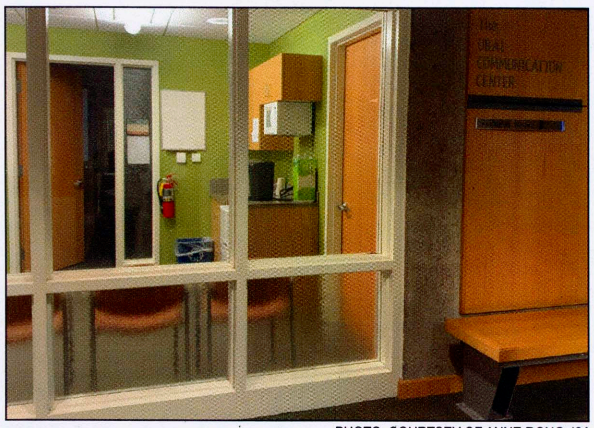

PHOTO COURTSEY OF ANNE RONG '24

The OCC is located on the second floor of KJ.

Multilingual international students and Hysell alike also consider student tutors' multilingual training inadequate. Ingabire has not revisited the Writing Center after its acquisition of multilingual support, maintaining that "a one hour training isn't enough to replace ten years of experience" that professional tutors could offer. "They're not qualified to be teaching the way international students should be taught," says Hysell. "Why does a peer tutor have more value than a professional tutor?"

Though primarily reliant on student tutors, the Writing Center and OCC do enlist the expertise of Susan Goldberg, formerly one of ESOL's two-professional tutors, to "create that continuity" for former ESOL frequenters, says Ambrose. However, Hysell notes that Goldberg is "not getting students," even though, according to Hysell, "she's got like two PhDs and she speaks like four languages." Gaffney adds that Hanson offers her multilingual expertise in one-on-one tutoring sessions as well. Hanson works from her office, and Lu felt after working with Goldberg that she should also have a separate room as "acknowledgement" that her experience distinguishes her from student tutors. Goldberg has declined to comment.

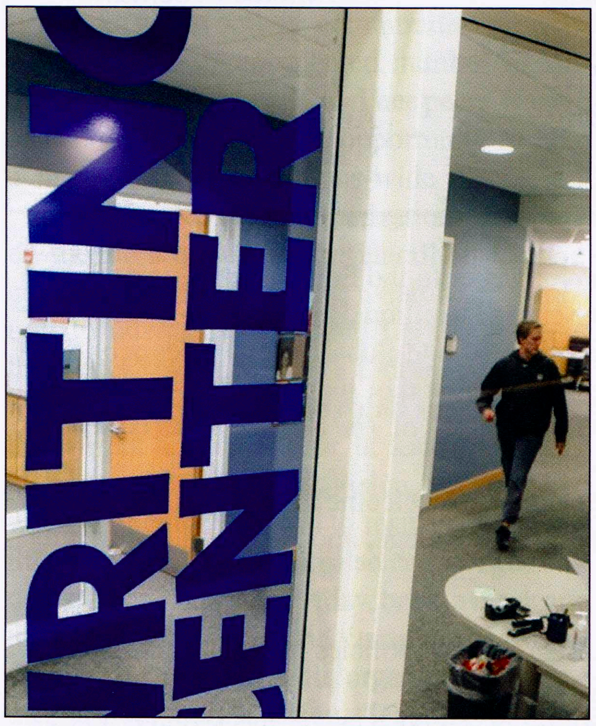

PHOTO COURTSEY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

The Writing Center offers support in KJ.

Apart from Mezher's poor Writing Center experience, his OCC experience was useful because Bondi was his tutor. Goldberg and ESOL's former tutors are multilingual, but Mezher owes his positive experience to how Bondi understood his struggle with English both as an individual and a fellow international Hamilton student. Ambrose understands the importance of hiring multilingual student tutors; the Writing Center student tutor Handshake application states that it "encourage[s] applications from students who can read papers written in multiple languages." According to the OCC's consultant webpage, five of fourteen OCC tutors are multilingual and eight languages are covered, including English. The Writing Center's number is not publicly available, but Goldberg '24 estimates that four out of twenty-six tutors are multilingual.

Still, for a large proportion of multilingual international students, the Writing Center and OCC are entirely foreign places. Chinese international student Athenia Li '24 is one of them, having never visited either. "I don't even know what OCC does," she admits, nor what services they offer. Ingabire, though having used the Writing Center once, is similarly confused about the OCC: "what's the purpose of that? When should we come in? Is it only for homework? Can I just come and speak?" Ambrose, knowing that ESOL students were often unsure about using the Writing Center or the OCC, hopes that with multilingual tutoring moving fully under the two centers, students will have "less confusion about where to go." But even to students like Li who also did not use ESOL in the past, the Writing Center and OCC were never visible options to them. "Either I'm just ignorant," Li says, or "or they just assume that [we] know."

Looking to the future, Hanson is taking new steps to increase multilingual resources, including launching a virtual speaker series of multilingual experts. By working to support faculty and student tutors, Hanson aims to create "institutional change" for multilingual instruction rather than it being "designated to one person." Akuleme, among other international students Hanson reached out to in preparation for her position, can tell "she cares a lot about us." But Hanson, Gaffney and Ambrose can only operate and enact change in the academic sphere. "I'm not here to help with the social support piece of it," Hanson explains, because it "falls under the Dean of International Students."

A Missing International Student Social Space

"The other piece" of the external review, says Gaffney, was that the Dean of Students Office would be hiring a full-time Dean of International Student Services by Fall 2022. Ambrose is keen on the new position working in tandem with the Writing Center and OCC. Instead of having "one office that was doing both academic support and a lot of social support [from Hysell]… and then half of an office in Allen Harrison… now there could be more support that exists in both of those areas," she says. Dean Harrison believes the new hire will spur an "internationalization," of Hamilton, turning the campus into an international student space by making it "more aware and understanding of international student needs on a broader scale."

But while Dean Harrison, Gaffney and Ambrose are excited for the change, international students are pessimistic at this grand "internationalization" when they remember the limited role of the Dean of International Students from past experiences with Dean Harrison. Dean Harrison says that his office is "geared towards social, day-to-day living, advising students from a non-academic standpoint," but Bondi claims the only social support she receives is "every once in a while, that email of 'Hey! You good? Your taxes are due. Sign your I-20.'" "He's a nice guy," Huang agrees, "but he offers help in terms of legal issues—so like driver's license, social security, I-20s, that kind of thing. But that's pretty much it."

Regina Johnson, who provides administrative support for Dean Harrison as Staff Assistant at the Dean Of Students Office, reiterates that hers and Dean Harrison's are "not a social role." As a result, knowing that their social support will fall to a position and office historically lacking in the very social support it is designated for, students are doubtful of any meaningful change to come from the new hire. "So," Mezher says, "I don't care where internationalization is going—where is our social space?"

"Part of the culture shift," says Hanson of her academic role, is differentiating between multilingual and international students. Dean Harrison expresses a similar sentiment in regards to a social space for international students, believing that it "should much, much more come from an office like International Student Services than it should come from ESOL." "Drawing that line," as Gaffney understood it, "helped to make some of those distinctions a little cleaner."

For better or worse, ESOL blurred that line. While Rai agrees that "on paper," ESOL should not be the designated international student space, he explains that to the administration, "we're always an afterthought. There's no resource other than this imperfect one that's skewed to internationals," who are often both multilingual and international. Without ESOL or any administrative support, Mezher says, "everything's gone."

"But it is not such a bleak situation," Akuleme believes, "there's ICA." The International Cultural Association (ICA), says Dhouib, is "the one organization making an effort to make sure the international community has at least someone to represent them." Rai and Akuleme are both former ICA Treasurers, and Bondi and Mezher serve respectively as the current ICA Treasurer and Vice President. But Lu, Li and Huang all feel that the ICA has "no presence" on campus, and Rai believes there is still the need for an international student space equivalent to the Days-Massolo Center or the Afro-Latin Cultural Center. "If that's something that needs to happen," Johnson contends, "we need to hear from [ICA]. And hopefully they will take that step." Mezher is confident the ICA will, but has no faith that the Hamilton administration will listen. "They were never responsive and I doubt they will be," Mezher laments. "But in case that happens, then I could see international students being more reliant on the ICA as the new ESOL… But if not, then I don't know."

"We were ahead of our time," Hysell maintains. "It could've gotten bigger, it could've done more." But ultimately, multilingual international students know that ESOL will not return. Still, they remain cautiously hopeful that the resources ESOL provided will reappear in some form. For Bondi, "if money doesn't go into the ESOL program but goes to providing those resources, I'm okay with that." "I don't really mind where it comes from either," Akuleme admits, and Dhouib wants "resources, if not for me, for other students." "Just give us a space," asks Mezher, "That's all we're asking for. If you won't bring back ESOL as it was and not give us the level of support that we used to have, at least give us a space to get back some social aspect of it."

March 10, 2022

Dear members of the Hamilton Community,

It has been a very busy time as we have all been counting down the hours until spring break. We are almost there! In the meantime, we at *The Spectator* are pleased to release our first issue of the semester featuring a longform investigation piece. Our longform team has been working diligently since the start of the semester on conducting interviews, researching and writing on some of the bigger issues affecting our community, and we are excited to begin publishing these stories on a regular basis throughout the rest of the year.

At the start of the semester, we began discussions on how best to increase our online and social media presence to increase accessibility and awareness for the topics we cover. We would like to thank Ray and Evelyn who recently joined our team as social media editors for all of the work they have put in and for the work that is yet to come. Be sure to check out the articles uploaded to our website at spec.hamilton.edu, and follow us on our social media platforms as we continue to expand our presence across Instagram and Twitter.

We wish everyone a wonderful spring break, and we are looking forward to a great second half of the semester when we return. Until then, rest, rejuvenate, read some Spec.

Best,
Eric and Emma Mae

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Celebrating 175 years,
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The Spectator's Letter to the Editor section is designed to be a forum for the entire Hamilton community to discuss and debate campus, local, national, and global issues. Pieces published in the section express the opinion of the individual writers and are not necessarily the opinions of *The Spectator*, its editors or the Media Board.

Letters to the Editor are welcome from all students, alumni/ae, faculty, friends of the college, and Hamilton community members.

The Spectator has the following policies for submission:

1. Submissions are due by 10:00 p.m. on the Monday before publication. The editors reserve the right to refuse any late submissions.
2. Letters should be no longer than 500 words. The editors reserve the right to cut off letters at 500 words.
3. Letters submitted anonymously will not be printed.
4. *The Spectator* reserves the right not to publish any letter it deems inappropriate for publication.
5. If a piece is determined to be libelous, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, or an unnecessary and/or unwarranted ad hominem or personal attack, it will not be published.

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Our Hamilton hosts "Let's Talk About the Letter" teach-in, hundreds of students attend

by Nikki Greenberg '25
STAFF WRITER

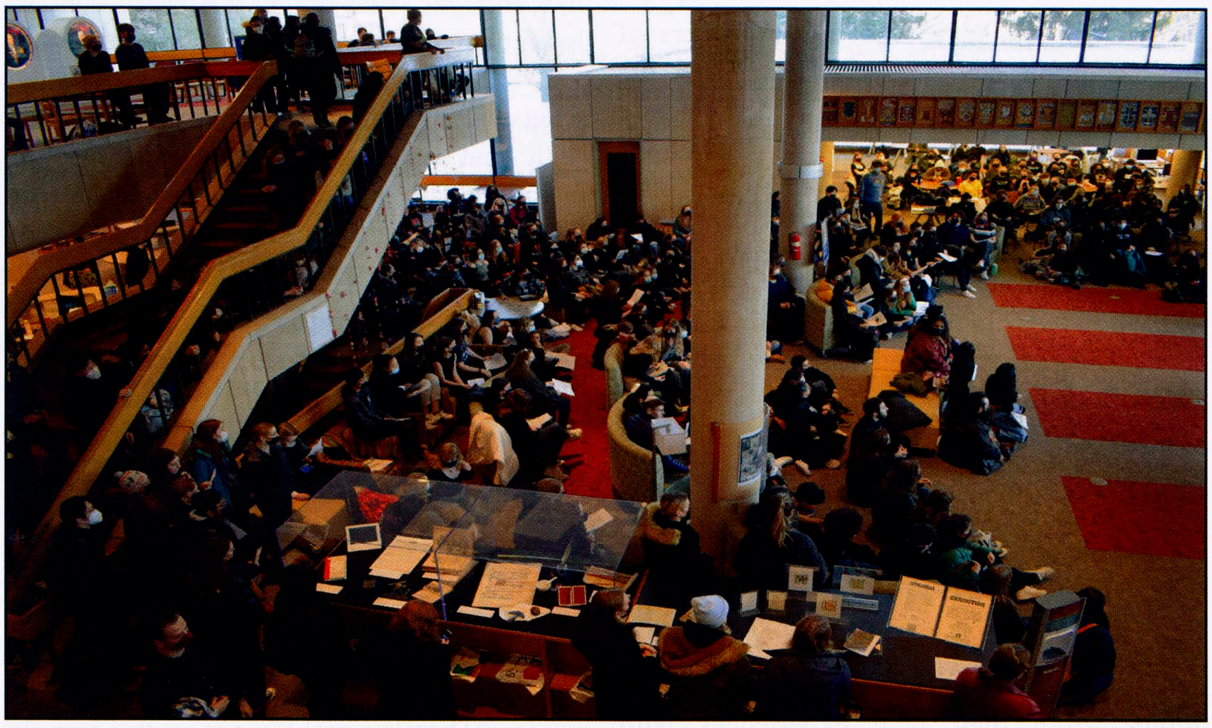

PHOTO BY HUZAIR LATIF '23

Hundreds of students gather in Burke Library to listen to speakers at the Our Hamilton event.

On Friday, March 4, student movement Our Hamilton hosted a student-led teach-in, where students learned and talked about the history of activism and experiences of BIPOC students, faculty and staff at Hamilton College.

Misaki (Maya) Funada '22, a student who played a large role in planning the event, explained that the event aimed to "start a buzz" about the issues taking place on campus. In light of the letter of resignation posted on Assistant Professor of Anthropology Mariam Durrani's door, many students around campus had already begun a conversation.

Funada explained that she was surprised to see so many students interested in the issue, including those whom she previously did not see in activist communities on campus. With an unprecedented number of students attending, Funada and her peers wanted to make the most of this opportunity to hold a more long-term, campus-wide discussion.

Many student organizations forwarded the same email to the Hamilton College community on Thursday, March 3, which urged students to attend the "Let's Talk About the Letter" event in Burke Library on Friday, March 4 at 5:00 p.m. The email stated that "in the current academic year, at least six faculty members, who are Black, Asian, queer, or/and woman of color, decided to resign from Hamilton College." The email also encouraged students to wear black on Friday, bring a mask and marker to the library and come to the library with friends. In the email, organizers outlined the goals for the discussion: "[sharing] our sadness and anger with the community, [starting] conversations to better understand the campus climate and the history of white supremacy and [showing] our support for marginalized groups of students, faculty, and staff."

Event organizers estimate that 300 to 400 students and faculty gathered that Friday to hear students discuss Professor Durrani's letter of resignation, the Alexander Hamilton Institute (AHI) and the history of student activism on campus. Organizers handed out articles, infographics and flyers as students entered the library, and encouraged students to sign their names on a large sign with the words "Our Hamilton" painted on it. Video recordings of the speeches can be found on the Our Hamilton instagram page, @our.hamilton.

The organizers asked Saphire Ruiz '22 to be a part of the teach-in based on their knowledge of activism and group organization. During the event, Ruiz provided an overview of activist movements on the Hamilton campus, a subject which they have spent significant time researching. In an interview, Ruiz explained that their research is important because "movements are weakened when people don't know what has happened before." Ruiz also stated that the current political climate on Hamilton's campus is very similar to the periods of time just before previous movements on campus, such as The Movement or The Social Justice Initiative.

Following the discussion in Burke Library, the crowd of students made their way to the Taylor Science Center, where a faculty and trustee reception was being hosted in the atrium. Students filled the atrium as well as the balconies on the second and third floors. Organizers handed out pieces of paper with the words "You value me for my _____ , but NOT my story." Students could write in the blank what they felt the school valued them for, and then could read the flyers aloud in front of trustees and professors.

Funada, Nicole Rodriguez '22, Eric Kopp '22, Sam Greenhouse '22, Meraly Morales '25, Diego Inzunza '25, Avani Pugazhendi '22, Grace Goldberg '24, Olivia James '23, Rachel Lee '22, Steven Campos '22 and Yanki Kung '23 planned the event.

During her speech, Funada revealed that the above group planned the event in just four days. Since there was not much time to plan such an event, Funada embraced many of the non-academic skills she learned while working at a start-up in Japan during her gap year. She emphasized that activist groups can learn a lot about productivity and project management from professional organizations outside of Hamilton, although many student activists might not always agree with their corporate practices.

The aforementioned group of students who organized the teach-in decided to name this movement Our Hamilton. According to its instagram page, Our Hamilton aims to "fight for a more equitable Hamilton community for students, faculty, and staff." Funada explained that several students in Our Hamilton were looking for a course of systemic action to express their frustration at the mistreatment of Hamilton faculty, students and staff of color.

Although the group wants to see tangible change on the Hamilton campus as soon as possible, Funanda and her teammates firmly believe that understanding the issues taking place is their top priority. Our Hamilton members will be discussing their goals for the rest of this semester and ideal organizational structure over the spring break.

Our Hamilton is further concerned with the sustainability and succession process within student-run organizations, as the group views this as an issue that many groups on campus have not always effectively tackled in the past.

Funada wants to ensure that the Our Hamilton group remains a resource for promoting social justice even after most of the founding members graduate this spring.

March 10, 2022

YDSA hosts "Candles for Ukraine" vigil

by Anoushka Aswin '25
NEWS EDITOR

On Thursday, March 3, members of the Hamilton community gathered for the "Candles for Ukraine" vigil to demonstrate support for those affected by the Russian invasion. The event was organized by the Hamilton College Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA), with Matt Surprenant '23 and Gabriel Bit-Babik '25 leading the process.

Student speakers included Surprenant, Bit-Babik, Sarah Sandison '23, Kateryna Tsaryova '23 and Vesa Miftari '24. Faith speakers Imam Thomas Facchine and Rabbi Ethan Bair shared prayers and words of support for the people of Ukraine. From the Hamilton faculty, Assistant Professor of Russian Languages and Literatures Jason Cieply also delivered a speech.

Students spoke about a variety of topics, from their own experiences with Ukrainian residents to their views on student activism on campus. Tsaryova in particular focused on activism towards Ukraine, questioning, "Where is the intent? What is the intent?" The speech urged students to consider the objective of their activism. Tsaryova argued that a hashtag, slogan or Instagram story is not enough, and that those wanting to show support must be authentic and take concrete action.

Towards the end of the vigil, each attendee lit their candle and took part in a moment of silence. Speakers asked those attending to take the time to reflect on the events happening in Ukraine and ways to stand in solidarity with the victims of the war.

"Everyone has seen the event and the tangible donations gathered during it as Hamilton adding their voice to a growing call for peace. We're all living and studying here on a hill where at times it's easy to disconnect from the issues abroad. We're a country that hasn't had a war fought on its soil in over a century, and so I think we've all become somewhat comfortable in going to sleep at night not thinking of the millions of human lives thrown into havoc by war. The powerful few declare it, and the peaceful many are forced to die in it. Not just in Ukraine, but also in Syria, Myanmar, Yemen and tragically elsewhere," said a representative from YDSA.

The vigil ended with the opportunity to donate to various organizations such as the Ukrainian Red Cross, Fight for Right, Voices of Children and Libereco through cash boxes and HillCard readers. The donations raised at the vigil totalled over $341. An open discussion regarding the events in Ukraine with Professor Cieply also followed the event.

"In many ways, this [vigil] does not feel like enough," said the YDSA email containing a community-wide invitation to the vigil.

"I think that we must first acknowledge what we students can do and come to grips with what we can't. We don't have the resources individually to send something like an airlift of humanitarian aid from Clinton to Kyiv but at YDSA, we stress the power of collective organizing. Making a combined effort to help donate, campaign for and otherwise assist with pressing issues such as how to help the growing Ukrainian refugee population would be an excellent start," said the YDSA representative.

Much of the support on campus has come from student led clubs, with the College Democrats, International Cultural Association, Disabled Students Network and Center for Intersectional Feminism all supporting the organization of the "Candles for Ukraine" vigil.

"There's a real hunger on this campus to have student engagement and activism," said Bit-Babik, noting the high turnout at the "Let's Talk About the Letter" event held Friday, March 4. Bit-Babik also spoke about the future of student activism on campus, emphasizing that the main problem he has encountered from upperclassmen has been burn-out from the pressure of activist responsibilities. As a first year, he wants to be able to "continue to evolve and push to the end without burning out."

When asked if the Hamilton administration could be doing more to support Ukraine, Bit-Babik was concerned that the administration "uses us as a way to show that Hamilton is doing something for Ukraine. They use our efforts and work without doing something themselves." He has noticed that the history of activism on campus has often led to the institutional issue of administration co-opting the efforts of student activists. Bit-Babik believes "if we really want to make a difference, whether it be for Ukraine or otherwise, student-led efforts have to be supported by the administration," and this support includes lasting active dialogue surrounding these issues.

In an email sent to the Hamilton community, President David Wippman condemned the actions of the Russian government, writing, "Russia's invasion of Ukraine represents one of the most flagrant breaches of the fundamental norms governing the international order since the United Nations Charter was signed in 1945, and it has created a humanitarian and geopolitical crisis that is just beginning." He concludes with offering "sympathy and support to those students, alumni, parents, faculty, and staff who have family or friends in Ukraine or are otherwise directly affected."

Hamilton-sponsored events on the Russia-Ukraine crisis have primarily focused on spreading awareness and education.

On Friday, March 4, the Levitt Center held "Crisis in Ukraine," a panel discussion featuring Sol M. Linowitz Visiting Professor of International Affairs Robin Quinville, Henry Platt Bristol Professor of International Relations Alan Cafruny and Professor of Government Sharon Rivera. Furthermore, an alumni organized event, "Crisis in Ukraine: Causes and Consequences," featured a virtual series addressing the causes and implications of the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

PHOTO BY HANA DOLAN '25

Members of the Hamilton community light candles in solidarity of the victims in Ukraine.

Public Speaking Competition names Manguwa, Wolff and Zhang as winners

by Rose Alarcon '22
STAFF WRITER

On Saturday, March 5, the finals of the annual Public Speaking Competition took place at 1:00 p.m. in the Chapel, where three prizes were awarded. Open to some members beyond the immediate Hamilton community, the event was masked with the exception of the speakers when they took their turn on stage. According to the competition website, "each prize has a maximum speech length of eight minutes. Speeches should be planned and rehearsed. You may not use props, PowerPoint, or other aids, including in the form of clothing."

The Oral Communication Center (OCC) hosted the event. Brooke Kessler '22 and Peri Kessler '22, who have worked at the OCC for three years, MC'd the event. All Hamilton students are eligible to enter and compete, but only eight students arrived at the finals.

The first competition was for the Clark Prize—only seniors were eligible to compete during this round. Unlike the other awards, this prize requires the addressing of a prompt, "What lesson(s) should we learn from the COVID-19 pandemic?" The two seniors who competed were Cherry Zhang '22 and Jacob Hane '22. Zhang ultimately won the prize with her speech entitled "How Productive Should I Be? Reflections on the Meanings of Work." She used her speech to discuss the effect of capitalism on the significance of a person's value. She emphasized how the pandemic taught her that there is more to life than work.

Five students competed for the McKinney Prize, which provides students with the option to speak about a topic of their choice. This prize was given in two installments to two students, the first for seniors and the second for underclassmen.

Abbie Wolff '22 and Samantha Tassillo '22 competed for this prize, with Wolff and her speech "Apathy and Access: Accessibility at Hamilton College" winning the award. The speech tackled the issue of accessibility on campus, showcasing both the problems and potential early solutions.

Joe Maalouf '23, Tinashe Dylan Manguwa '25 and Emma Reilly '24 also gave speeches. Manguwa won the prize for his speech, "Here is Holy," where he reflected upon his experience at Hamilton, concluding that "I've learned two things during my time here. Institutions are often dehumanizing and Hamilton is no exception. The second is one a former teacher of mine lent to me. Whatever institution I find myself in [...] I should give myself permission to be fully there. To not conform to norms and questioning. As such the change I wish to see begins right here, where I am, in this space."

The last prize was The Warren E. Wright Prize, which is only open to students who have taken a public speaking class at Hamilton. Unlike the other speeches, which were persuasive, this speech was meant to be informative. Following their performance, students were also required to field and answer two questions from the audience. Competitors were given two minutes to answer said questions.

The finalists were Wolff, Hane and Emilio Vicioso '23. Wolff won her second award of the day with her talk titled "Reimagining Time and Space with Walkable Communities." Her speech discussed a walkable city which is built with travel times in mind. She compares such spaces to "sprawling" American cities like Los Angeles, which are dependent on a car to travel anywhere.

Students can find more information about the Public Speaking Competition on the OCC website. This section contains a detailed breakdowns of the process of the competition, the different awards and recordings of past speeches. Both Kesslers encourage students to participate in this annual event as they "believe it is so important for students to showcase their public speaking skills and share with the Hamilton community issues and topics they are passionate about."

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

Abbie Wolff '22 delivers one of her speeches.

Campus Safety Incident Report

In an effort to respect discretion, *The Spectator* and Campus Safety have not disclosed the idenities of the students involved in these reports.

Fri. March 4

9:32 a.m. Parking Complaint — KTSA Parking Lot (Milbank/Babbitt)

2:44 p.m. Medical Emergency — Kennedy Arts Center (KTSA)

6:58 p.m. Medical Emergency — Eells House

10:56 p.m. Medical Emergency — Commons Dining Facility

11:47 p.m. Noise Complaint — Milbank Residence Hall

Sat., March 5

1:09 a.m. Area Check — Howard Diner

2:29 a.m Medical Emergency — Milbank Residence Hall

4:07 a.m. Medical Emergency — Eells House: Basement

4:49 p.m. Area Check — Rogers Estate: Level 2

11:08 p.m. Area Check — Eells House

Sun., March 6

1:59 a.m. Area Check — Bundy Dining Facility

10:22 p.m. Fire Alarm — Ferguson House

Mon., March 7

6:33 a.m. Animal Complaint — Commons Dining Facility

1:57 p.m. Medical Emergency — Carnegie Residence Hall

11:22 p.m. Animal Complaint — Days-Massolo Center

March 10, 2022

L.A. Clippers' Gillian Zucker '90 set to deliver 2022 Commencement address

by the Hamilton College Communications and Marketing Office

Gillian Zucker '90, president of business operations for the NBA's LA Clippers and a 1990 graduate of Hamilton College, will deliver Hamilton's 2022 Commencement address and receive an honorary degree on Sunday, May 22, at 10:30 a.m., in the Margaret Bundy Scott Field House.

In addition to Zucker, honorary degrees will be awarded to former LaGuardia Community College president Gail Mellow, and Elaine Weiss, author of the critically acclaimed *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote*, and a 1973 graduate of Kirkland College, a woman's college that merged with Hamilton in 1978.

Mellow will offer the Baccalaureate address on Saturday, May 21, at 3 p.m., in the Margaret Bundy Scott Field House. 505 members of the class of 2022 will receive bachelor's degrees during Hamilton's Commencement ceremony.

As president of business operations of the LA Clippers, Gillian Zucker leads all Clippers business functions as well as the Forum, the Agua Caliente Clippers and development of Intuit Dome, the future home of the Clippers that will open for the 2024-25 NBA season.

Zucker secured close to $1 billion in partnership revenue for the team and Intuit Dome around the groundbreaking of the new arena, while driving industry-leading innovations and advancements in the fan experience and sustainability. She has also spearheaded the transformation of the Clippers' in-arena experience and brand positioning, led substantial growth of ticketing, partnership and broadcast revenues and guided the development of Clippers CourtVision, which uses machine learning and artificial intelligence to transform the game-watching experience.

With more than 25 years of experience in the sports industry, Zucker has worked in all major U.S. sports. Her focus is creating a culture of constant improvement and a fan-first philosophy, using innovation and strategic discipline to empower team efforts around operating as an elite championship organization. She is further committed to positioning the Clippers as a powerful community asset, positively impacting lives beyond the court.

Zucker has been honored by *Los Angeles Magazine* as one of 10 Wonder Women changing L.A., by *CSQ Magazine* as a Visionary in Sports and Entertainment, and by United Nation's Women L.A. as a Champion of Change. She has also been named the *Los Angeles Business Journal* Executive of the Year, an All-Star by VenuesNow, and a Top Woman in Media by Cynopsis, and she is a multi-year member of the *LA Business Journal's* LA500, a list of the most influential people in L.A.

Zucker serves on the Young Presidents Organization board and the board of directors of the global investment bank Houlihan Lokey.

Gail Mellow retired in 2019 from LaGuardia Community College, where she served as president since 2000. A member of the City University of New York (CUNY) system, LaGuardia is a recognized leader among community colleges for conceptualizing and launching programs as well as teaching methods that become national innovations.

Following her retirement from LaGuardia and through December, 2021, Mellow helped create and launch the New York Jobs CEO Council, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing access to high-potential jobs for 100,000 low-income New Yorkers, especially from Black, LatinX, and Asian communities.

An expert on the history, development and future of the American community college, Mellow co-authored *Minding the Dream: The Process and Practice of the American Community College*. Her other co-authored book *Taking College Teaching Seriously: Pedagogy Matters* relates to fostering student success through faculty-centered practice improvement.

Mellow is eager to raise the profile of community colleges and under her leadership, LaGuardia's student enrollment and full-time faculty grew three-fold. External funding increased dramatically, with particular emphasis on workforce development programs and initiatives that support at-risk students.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LA CLIPPERS, GAIL MELLOW AND NINA SUBIN

(From left to right) Gillian Zucker '90, Gail Mellow and Elaine Weiss K '73.

Mellow is a national authority on the changing landscape of higher education, strategies for improving the nation's graduation rate, and the important role community colleges play in growing America's middle class and strengthening the economy. She has been extensively quoted in major publications, including *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and has appeared on NPR, MSNBC and PBS broadcasts. Mellow received an associate's degree from Jamestown Community College, a bachelor's from SUNY Albany, and her master's and Ph.D. in social psychology from George Washington University.

Elaine Weiss is a 1973 graduate of Kirkland College, Hamilton's former sister institution for women, and author of the critically acclaimed *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote.*

In a long and varied journalism career, Weiss has worked as a Washington correspondent, congressional aide and speechwriter, magazine editor and university journalism instructor. Her feature writing has been recognized with prizes from the Society of Professional Journalists, and her byline has appeared in many national publications, including *The Atlantic, Harper's, New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Christian Science Monitor,* as well as reports and documentaries for National Public Radio. Her long-form writing garnered a Pushcart Prize "Editor's Choice" award, and she is also a MacDowell Colony Fellow.

Weiss' first book, *Fruits of Victory: The Woman's Land Army in the Great War* was excerpted in *Smithsonian Magazine* online and was featured on C-SPAN and public radio stations nationwide. Her most recent book, *The Woman' Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote* (Viking/Penguin) has been hailed as a "riveting, nail-biting political thriller" with powerful parallels to today's political environment. *The Woman's Hour* was a Goodreads Readers' Choice Award winner, short-listed for the 2019 Chautauqua Prize, and received the American Bar Association's highest honor, the 2019 Silver Gavel Award. Weiss' next book, *Spell Freedom*, will be published by Simon & Schuster in 2025.

While at Kirkland College, Weiss was in the first cohort of women to participate in Hamilton's Washington program, and she wrote for *The Spectator*. Following her Kirkland graduation, she earned a master's degree from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.

Weiss is a popular public speaker, with engagements at the Library of Congress, Chautauqua Institution and the New York Historical Society, among others. She is a frequent media commentator on women's political organization and modern voting rights, with recent interviews on NPR's *All Things Considered*, CBS's *Sunday Morning*, and PBS's *American Experience*.

Community members who are vaccinated, boosted and masked are welcome to attend the ceremony.

March 10, 2022

Levitt Center hosts "Crisis in Ukraine" panel event featuring faculty experts

by Maeve Sebold '22
STAFF WRITER

On March 4, the Levitt Center hosted a panel discussion on the current crisis in Ukraine. The panel featured three professors: Sol M. Linowitz Visiting Professor of International Affairs Robin Quinville, Henry Platt Bristol Professor of International Relations Alan Cafruny and Professor of Government Sharon Rivera. The panelists discussed the weeks of escalating tension and military build-up around Ukraine, and Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to invade. The discussion covered what led to this conflict, what Russia is hoping to accomplish, how the international community has responded and what might be the larger geopolitical consequences of the conflict.

Quinville, who was the former Charge d'Affaires (acting ambassador) at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, spoke first. Quinville recapped the Munich Security Conferences of 2007, 2015 and 2022. At the Conference in 2007, Putin gave the keynote speech. He protested a unipolar world and NATO expansion. However, he claimed that Russia would always operate strictly within the international legal framework. In 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that the new world order is based on the "peaceful co-existence of peoples and the inviolability of frontiers," but Putin's actions in Crimea challenged this.

Quinville then moved to the present day – the 2022 Conference at which Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke. Zelenskyy reminded the audience that Ukraine was at the time surrounded by 150,000 Russian troops. He accused the West of appeasing Putin since 2007 and warned that the issue was not about war in Ukraine, but war in Europe. The following week, Russia invaded Ukraine, which "violated Russia's commitments to the transatlantic community, to the U.S., to our European allies and partners."

Rivera began her presentation by declaring that the situation represents one of the most "serious crises since World War II… and it is a human tragedy, as all wars are." Rivera focused on two main aspects of the crisis: the fundamental cause and the potential repercussions going forward.

Regarding the former aspect, Rivera discussed the main circulating theories as to why Putin amassed troops at the border and why he invaded. The first theory is that during the troop build-up, Putin was trying to shore up domestic political support. This idea is known as the "rally around the flag effect." In Rivera's opinion, this reasoning received too much emphasis in the run-up to the invasion. She believes that in the past couple of years, Putin has moved beyond caring about public approval. Thus, Rivera stated that any bump in popularity from action against Ukraine would have been welcomed by Putin, but it would not have been the primary reason for invasion.

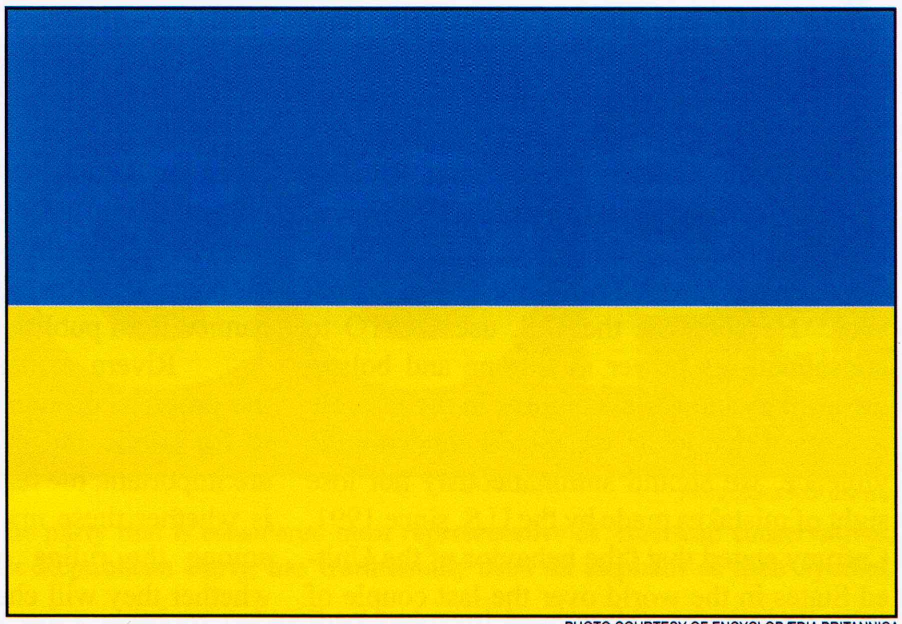

PHOTO COURTESY OF ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA

The Ukrainian flag has become a symbol shown around the world.

The second circulating theory is the security question. Russia's leadership has repeatedly stated that it felt threatened by NATO expansion, and thus reacted defensively. An example of this sentiment is evident in a pro-Kremlin newspaper, *Argumenti i Fakty*, that stated, "NATO Is a Cancer: Should We Cure It?" Putin stated that the Soviet Union received verbal assurances in the 1990s that NATO would not expand eastward. Although these assurances were walked back, Russia believed they were still promised this, and thus saw any eastward NATO expansion as betrayal. Rivera's belief regarding the security issue is that the timing of Putin's ire does not correlate with NATO expansion. If this was the case, Putin would have talked about it during the earlier years of his presidency, as he came to power in 2000 and there were major NATO expansions in 1999 and 2004.

While Russian resentment toward NATO's expansion may be a piece of the puzzle, Rivera proposes that Putin's reasoning has broader civilizational and imperial roots. Putin never came to terms with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and he saw Ukraine as steadily choosing to move into the western realm. These fed into the "pattern of humiliation" perceived by Putin at the hands of the West.

Regarding the civilizational roots, Rivera argued that Putin has shown concern with the increase of liberalism in Europe. He saw Russia as the "last bastion and defender" of traditional values and religion in Europe. Additionally, he is deeply worried about having a functional democracy on Russia's borders. What would happen if Russians saw this and wanted democracy for themselves? According to Rivera, Russia's invasion is fundamentally about "rewriting the post-Soviet order, integrating Ukraine with Russia… keeping Ukraine from being

Article continued on page 10

PHOTO COURTSEY OF AP NEWS

An armed man stands by a destroyed Russian military vehicle.

Article continued from page 9

a part of a democratic Europe…and keeping Putin's dream of reintegrating the former Soviet lands alive." Professor Cafruny began by explaining that we are "entering a dangerous new era that is seemingly only just beginning that presents a dire situation for the European balance of powers and a catastrophic humanitarian situation."

While Cafruny agrees with Rivera's proposed civilizational dimension, he believes more emphasis should be put on the expansion of NATO, which he deems a "tragic mistake." He contends the U.S. uses NATO to consolidate its power in Europe and bolster the military industrial complex in the U.S. He expressed that while we should condemn the violence, we should simultaneously not lose sight of mistakes made by the U.S. since 1991. Cafruny stated that "the behavior of the United States in the world over the last couple of decades has been far worse than anything that has been done so far in Ukraine," noting U.S. actions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and more.

Cafruny believes the world needs to return to negotiations to stop arming Ukraine. The foundation of the negotiations should be that Ukraine is neutral, does not join NATO and returns to the Minsk Agreement.

Rivera explained that an important aspect to consider is how isolated Putin is. He makes decisions within a small group of advisors and receives only palatable information. COVID-19 only worsened this isolation. Putin's isolation has led to miscalculations from misinformation, including Zelenskyy's willingness to remain in Ukraine and the willingness of Ukrainians to fight back.

There is also the issue of Russia's domestic situation. Rivera pointed out that in Russia so far, 8,000 people have been detained for protesting, and independent radio and news stations have been shuttered. Cafruny noted how his contacts at Russian news outlets have been banned from publishing non-Russian sources.

Rivera explained how dictators face the problem of authoritarian control relating to the public and elite. While mass protests are important, the real question going forward is whether these mass protests create cracks among the ruling elite and oligarchs and whether they will challenge Putin's authority.

As Quinville stated, "we are in this for the long haul. Sanctions take time and defending our values take time…for our European allies, the idea that borders can be changed by force is really anathema... because where one more post-war border is questioned, others could also be." The conflict in Ukraine has created a humanitarian crisis with millions of refugees who have been displaced by the invasion.

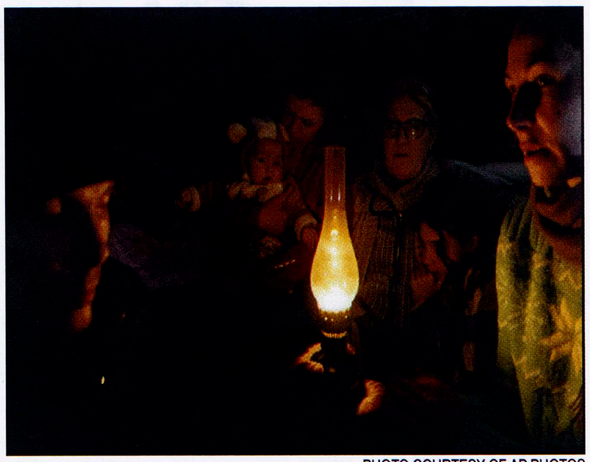

PHOTO COURTESY OF AP PHOTOS

Ukranian refugees huddle around a lamp.

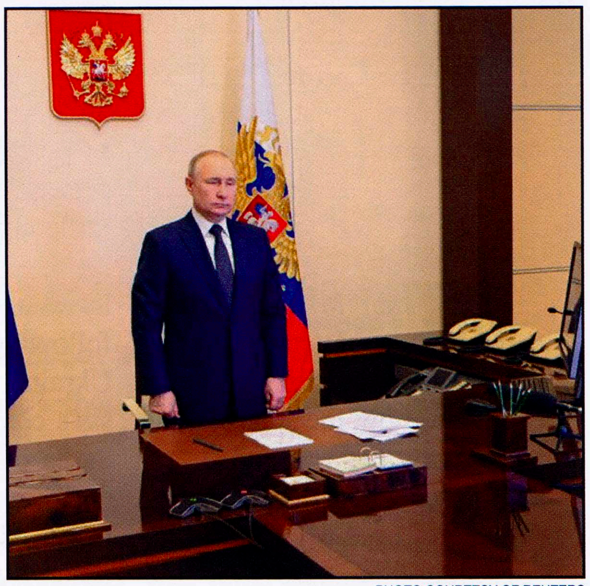

PHOTO COURTESY OF REUTERS

Russian president Vladimir Putin has been the subject of intense criticism worldwide.

How you can help

Donate to:

International Red Cross and Red Crescent, Ukraine
https://donate.redcrossredcrescent.org/ua/donate/~my-donation

Razom for Ukraine, provides medical supplies like tourniquet bandages, combat gauze, sterile pads, and satellite phones
https://razomforukraine.org/donate/

Voices of Children, provides psychological and psychosocial support to children who suffered as a result of war operations
https://voices.org.ua/en/donat/

Liberco, provides humanitarian aid, including operational humanitarian, medical, psychological and legal work
https://www.lphr.org/spenden/

OVD Info, police monitoring, financial and legal support for political prisoners and victims of police oppression in Russia
https://donate.ovdinfo.org/en#page=en

The above compilation contains a list of organizations to which some students and Rivera recommend donating for relief in Ukraine.

March 10, 2022

Conservatives need to speak up and stop getting in their own way

by Tristan Sollecito '24
OPINION CONTRIBUTOR

Anyone who knows me well knows that I lean more right than left. Considerably more, actually. I without question identify as politically conservative, and although politics are seldom a subject of my everyday conversations, I do sometimes stand out amongst my friends, classmates and teachers, a population that is comfortably 80% liberal. Growing up in New York City and also having attended what I consider to be left-leaning academic institutions my entire life, I am rarely part of a political majority. At least, it certainly feels that way. I have noticed over the last couple of years a scarcity of conservative opinions, whether it be in a classroom, a dorm room, at a lunch table or over the phone. I have heard from my few right-wing friends over and over again for years something to the effect of, "Ugh, I wish I could share my thoughts openly in class. Don't you feel like they suppress our opinions and only respect us if we agree with them?" Honestly, not at all. I used to think along those lines because I heard that cry repeatedly, but the more I thought about it, the more my frustration shifted away from those dastardly liberals and towards those that I agreed with.

It was easy to blame the left for the vast underrepresentation of conservative thoughts being shared, but honestly, it just does not make sense. I do not at all profess to be an anthropological mastermind. This is the opinion section, so for the sake of clarity, I will phrase what I am trying to say as an opinion: Conservatives need to speak more. A lot more. I absolutely do not want to generalize and pretend that not a single Republican young person is afraid to talk politics. However, in a setting such as class, I cannot imagine that I only agree with the handful of kids that I have heard share conservative views. They claim, "But no one will respect what I have to say, and they'll only entertain opinions they agree with." Really? Are you sure? I feel like you would have to try it first to know. I honestly cannot think of a time when I, or one of my classmates, shared a right-oriented suggestion or stance in class that did anything but incite enriching and productive discussion. In my experience, the more I fully describe my opinions to those that disagree with me, that is to say the more specific I can be, the more difficult it is for them to disregard or disrespect my complete political profile.

Again, I really do not want this article to sound like an assignment to whomever is reading. I have absolutely zero credibility or authority to tell you what to do or say. But, here is a fact and an opinion: I rarely hear a leftist idea met with any criticism or controversy. That is just a fact from my personal experience. The liberals I know do a perfectly reasonable job of accommodating any and all ideas coming from anyone who has something to say, including those ready to take an opposing stance. I personally tend to operate under the assumption that if you have something to hide, then you also have something to change. If someone is afraid of people knowing what they believe, then perhaps they should believe something different. Personally, if I feel strongly about an idea that I have (which, admittedly, many would argue that I do a little more than I should), I have a hard time thinking of good reasons to keep it to myself. I want to reiterate that I am in no way the model for a conservative college student. All I am trying to say is that I would love to see more left-wing ideas faced with contrary, conversation-enhancing opinions rather than awkward head nodding and vindicating "mm-hm's." That might sound obvious, but I think that a substantial piece of that puzzle would be for the average Republican student to stop holding liberals responsible for their apprehension against consevative views. I also want to reiterate that there certainly are conservatives I know that have no problem speaking their mind. I am not at all saying they cease to exist. But, I have to believe that there are more than I have seen. So if I may just offer one piece of advice to any of my fellow conservatives that hesitate to share their thoughts: let it fly, baby. Let the big dog eat. Share that conservative opinion, because there is a pretty good chance that it will enhance the conversation.

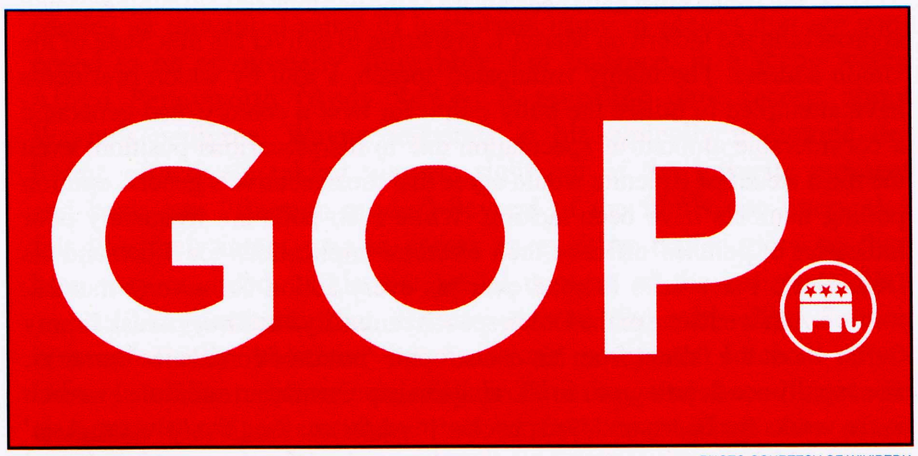

PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIPEDIA

The party that is considered most representative of American conservatives, the Republican Party, has traditionally used an elephant as their symbol.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SALON

Conservative Commentator and Wall Street Journal Columnist Jason L. Riley spoke about politics on the Sean Hannity Show.

March 10, 2022

On the State of the Union Address

by Matthew Collins '24
OPINION EDITOR

Joe Biden must have been aware of the perilous stakes involved when approaching the lectern on March 1, preparing to deliver his first State of the Union address. The highly anticipated speech, a tool by which presidents have attempted to utilize the bully pulpit for over a century, had generated a considerable amount of speculation due to his precarious position; even the most steadfast Bidenite would agree that the executive's general opinion polling numbers have been lacking. While such polls are frequently poor indicators of policies' efficacy, their electoral implications for Biden and his Democratic Party have loomed over his every action for several months.

A flawed State of the Union speech can easily backfire; just ask Jimmy Carter about the fallout from his catastrophic 'crisis of confidence' remarks. The rapidly accelerating war in Ukraine likely presented an additional wrench in the works for Biden and his speechwriters, forestalling the 'pivot to Asia' toward which American foreign policy has aspired for the past decade and forcing major rewrites to a speech that had likely been in the works for months.

Then Biden ascended the podium, appearing as intact as ever, and delivered an address of extraordinary magnitude.

Biden agitated from the commencement of his speech, keen to secure an undivided front in defiance of foreign aggression. As horrific as the invasion of Ukraine is, the reemergence of a common foe in Russia against which Americans can join forces is a veritable godsend for a president who has often rooted his political messaging in themes of unity. This is not, of course, to suggest that such a task is trivial. Galvanizing the nation in the face of Vladimir Putin's irredentist fantasy enough to heal the open wounds of American partisanism, just for a moment, would require both a spirited show of resistance and a firm hand on the tiller. Biden brought both in spades, dispelling any serious doubts about his capabilities as commander-in-chief and subtly drawing attention to his own masterful handling of the conflict in coordination with NATO. Precious few State of the Union openers can even get close to bringing every member of Congress to their feet, but this initial segment compelled even the president's staunchest opponents to stand in defiance of the ongoing Russian invasion.

One of Biden's most prominent fortes is his sincerity, a quality he let shine throughout his performance; indeed, his appeals against the invasion in particular were grounded not in off-putting *realpolitik*, but rather in common values of humanity. Oksana Markarova's presence at the address was all but natural amidst the compassion for Ukraine that Biden conveyed, a pattern that continued throughout the speech; none of his other Lenny Skutniks appeared to be shoehorned into the address either, instead flowing artlessly as the president pivoted to navigating his domestic agenda.

Biden addressed the numerous lingering complications of his presidency adroitly and efficiently, skillfully highlighting the empathetic motivations behind many of his policy proposals. He acknowledged the boogeyman of inflation that has haunted his administration for months on end, and while the strategic reserves he plans to release will only blunt rising oil prices, the gesture alone indicated the Biden administration's commitment to recognizing and alleviating the plights of common Americans. Basking in the light of his dawning 'infrastructure decade,' he expounded upon the benefits of last year's massive bipartisan infrastructure package, elucidating its long-term benefits and relating them to those mired in short-term struggles. While he announced initiatives to tackle addiction and prescription drug costs, pushed for expanded pre-K support and the Child Tax Credit and heralded the return of watchdogs to oversee price gouging, his compassionate delivery brought conviction to the platitudes that sound phony in the mouths of populists past and present. In order to placate and reassure increasingly disenchanted independents, the president had to abandon his previous reticence to concede that various aspects of his COVID-19 recovery project have not exactly proceeded according to plan. Biden knew full well that working-class America was souring on his vision of America, and he responded by staring the sword of Damocles down on national television; based on post-address polls, his gambit paid tremendous dividends. The president emerged unscathed and empowered.

Even the less tantalizing proposals Biden trotted out during the State of the Union contained their fair share of bright spots. The government's continued flirtations with protectionism and reversions to domestic manufacturing, for example, are less than auspicious signs for future economic growth, but the massive Intel chip plant outside of Columbus has enough geopolitical value to validate the policy through the lens of national security. Germany is currently suffering for its decision to export energy, given the stranglehold Russia now holds over the pipelines that provide Central Europeans their heating oil; while Biden would do to reinforce American commitments to international trade a tad, his recognition that the U.S. cannot remain naïve to the prospect of foreign embargos of vital manufactures is refreshing. Plus, considering the broad popularity of domestic manufacturing among the American people, a few plugs for 'buying American' in Biden's messaging are well worth their opportunity cost.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

Joe Biden receives applause during his State of the Union Address.

In many respects, the Biden administration began in earnest on March 1; for the first time, the president had the latitude to enunciate his vision unshackled from the constraints of his party, and he seized the opportunity with both hands to set his agenda. He made no attempt to address or justify *post hoc* the more controversial decisions of his presidency, keeping discussion of the CDC's COVID-19 regulations to a minimum and omitting the contentious Afghanistan withdrawal entirely. Nor did he tolerate the albatross of unpopular activist policies hanging about the neck of the Democratic Party, favoring an approach to shore up public support by unequivocally aligning his own priorities with those of actual Americans in need, not merely their self-appointed spokespersons. Even as he reverted to playing some of the old Democratic hits by the end of his speech, he managed to communicate his support for the poor and unaccepted without subsuming his own ideas to the party line. Without sacrificing time to enunciate his civil rights concerns, he gave veterans affairs and immigration reform the focus they deserve in the eyes of many Americans. Simplicity and necessity undergirded many of Biden's priorities, making his motivations approachable to common people; for example, his steadfast support for online privacy and mental health legislation likely helped reaffirm to otherwise skeptical American parents that his administration does, in fact, care a whole lot about children.

Unmoored from the yoke of opprobrium, yet flush with sympathy and support for the disenchanted and disenfranchised, Biden wielded the bully pulpit with a remarkable effectiveness unparalleled in his administration thus far. Granted, all but the most astonishing speeches have their share of blemishes, and this State of the Union did not quite prove itself the exception. Biden disappointingly omitted any sort of commitment to nuclear power in his renewable energy overtures and specified no mechanism to tie his proposed minimum wage to purchasing power. In the grand scheme of his address, however, these oversights are slight. When he needed a phenomenal speech more than ever, Biden delivered on the House floor, giving millions of Americans renewed hope that he might transfer that furious momentum to the nation.

March 10, 2022

Review: Matt Reeves' *The Batman* (2022)

by Max Bratter '25
STAFF WRITER

Many know Batman as a precise, dominant and lethal figure. He defines what an anti-hero is in the world of superheroes and villains. The previous two versions of the caped vigilante have been full of poise and brutality in their own distinctive ways, but similarly experienced with their crime-fighting. In American film director Matt Reeves' *The Batman* (2022), we watch a young Bruce Wayne (Robert Pattinson) in his introductory years as Batman as he takes on the dark depths of the crime that have riddled the city of Gotham, specifically in the form of the Riddler (Paul Dano).

The Batman introduces the Riddler before it introduces us to the caped crusader. This introductory scene uses the Riddler's first-person point-of-view to define what scenario is about to unfold. The use of different point-of-views throughout the film is a common occurrence and continuously immerses us in the action by providing us with dynamic perspectives of a scene's environment. Throughout this first sequence, it is apparent that the Riddler is deranged and sloppy in his violence, but calculated in the rest of his execution.

The Riddler's elaborate schemes to catch the city's (specifically Batman's) attention plays as a solid foil for this new version of the vigilante. While brutal in his implementation of justice, this latest effort sheds light on Batman's intelligence that we have only briefly touched upon in his previous iterations. *The Batman* has its considerable share of traditional crime-fighting, but the Riddler's puzzling plans give Batman the ability to work alongside police commissioner James Gordon (Jeffrey Wright) in a manner that is unlike its predecessors. Gordon primarily served as a voice for the people when interacting with Batman in the Christopher Nolan series, but *The Batman* shows him being almost entirely complicit in the vigilante's approach to crime.

This new version of Batman also shows his timidness that comes from his lack of experience. We see Batman often hurt in his brawls by regular thugs and henchmen, instead of the untouchable being that audiences normally know him for. Also, his self-confidence is clearly not all there, such as in a scene where he is hesitant to take flight off of a building and ends up crashing and injuring himself. *The Batman* constantly reminds us that Batman is not only Batman, but also Bruce Wayne.

Shot mostly in the dark, *The Batman* attributes much of its dialogue and tone to past noir stylizations. The film is incredibly gritty, with every flash of light catching the eye and brightening an entire shot. Most of the film's cinematography is so carefully choreographed that it feels picturesque at times with its coloring and set designs. There is a scene towards the latter half of the film where Batman is leading a group of survivors out from a sunken landscape and his presence is solely illuminated by a neon-colored flare. The film uses lighting for beautiful moments of symbolism like this, so we understand that this man is a true ray of hope within this terrorized city. Additionally, the darkness that drapes over much of the film's action plays in favor of the stunt choreography as it masks much of the CGI or editing tricks that would be obvious in daylight.

Catwoman (Zoë Kravitz) is also reintroduced in this new iteration. Every scene between Catwoman and Batman feels like a power struggle, where one is constantly trying to guide the moral compass of the other. The film also showcases a natural romantic chemistry between the two that is unparalleled by their precursors.

Carmine Falcone (John Turturro) and the Penguin (Colin Farrell) also add on to the film's star-studded supporting cast. Both play traditional mobsters that you would see straight out of a Martin Scorsese film. The Penguin particularly feels like an amalgamation of Robert De Niro's performances in such films. In contrast, Farrell's performance serves as a justified comedic relief to the film which can often drown in its own somber tone a little excessively.

The film hits most of the marks that a gritty superhero thriller should, but it sometimes almost feels like it basks too much in its own intensity. Pattinson's constantly stoic expression sometimes creates an unwanted sense of humorous irony in scenes that are supposed to be emotionally vulnerable. For instance, in a scene where Alfred Pennyworth (Andy Serkis) is revealing dark secrets about Wayne's pedigree, Wayne responds in his typically monotone delivery, effectively taking viewers right out of the intimate moment and back into "Batman mode." Several of the film's one-liners also felt like their intent was to create an exciting trailer more so than how they sounded within the actual context of the complete film.

The aesthetic that Reeves strived for with *The Batman* is emphatically bolstered by American composer Michael Giacchino's brilliant job of creating a haunting and brooding score to match the film's attitude. Full of bells and strings, the musical qualities of the film consistently envelope each scene perfectly.

The Batman begins with Bruce Wayne having a cynical attitude towards his occupation. He resents the city of Gotham for taking away his parents and subsequently becoming a landfill of crime and all that is evil. Unlike most vigilante tales though, we do not witness Batman's fall from grace within the public eye. Rather, we see Wayne develop sympathy for the city and its inhabitants who he protects. Yet after he generalizes Gotham as the embodiment of criminality, he realizes that many people are just trying to find a purpose, the Riddler and himself included. *The Batman* realizes that the hero does not only have to be a source of pain for villains everywhere, he can also be of assistance to those in need.

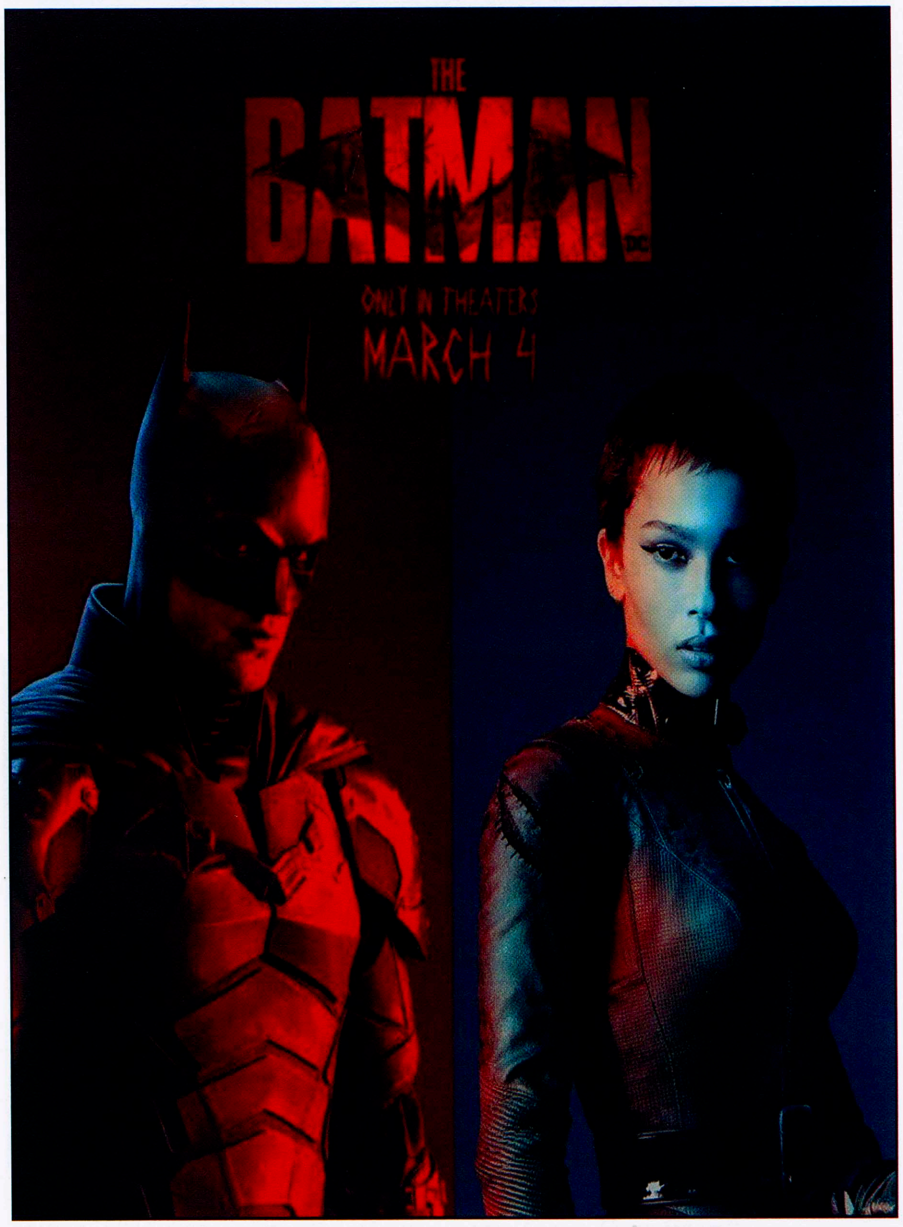

PHOTO COURTESY OF ACESHOWBIZ.COM

***The Batman* stars Robert Pattinson and Zoe Kravitz.**

Paint, Sip and let your worries melt away

by Eliza Roberts '24
STAFF WRITER

A typical Hamilton student would have been scanning their email for any events when a certain invite popped up: Thursday at 7:00 p.m. "Chill vibes at Bundy while we listen to some music, drink some mocktails, and paint whatever makes your heart happy :) Supplies and food on our end, just bring some friends!" Whoever wrote this email knew that a few key words could draw any student down that treacherous hill for a night to remember. Most notably "chill," "music," "drink," "paint" and "happy" are buzzwords that would catch anyone looking for a moment of rest. As the sun fell on Hamilton's campus, a select few trudged down the hill to Bundy Café for a night of painting and even more exciting sipping. Paint 'n Sip gathered the campus' artists, activity junkies and Bundy residents and allowed them to sit for a minute and just paint.

Even though there were high expectations from such an email, the event organizers truly came through. As students walked into the space, all the supplies were in front: canvases, paints of all different colors and brushes. Amongst the stress of midterms, general work and everything else on a college campus, a night of painting can be a simple relaxation that utilizes artistic abilities that may not have seen the light in a while. With the tables set up, the students settled into a rhythm of indistinct chatter as their canvases filled with patterns and pictures galore. The air in the room felt calming as if everyone had commenced a group meditation, and the stresses of the day melted away into the canvases at hand. On the couches sat the RA's on duty, but even they could not resist the activities of the night and, slowly but surely, they joined a table of their own and found themselves also immersed in paint and canvases.

Although these students could probably have used a real drink, they were thoughtfully provided with local culture in the form of Saranac mocktails. With Shirley temples, black cherry and orange cream soda, it felt like a personal open bar, and the boxes quickly emptied out. Even further, knowing the true motivations of Hamilton students on campus, the event was sponsored by Wingstop. On the far wall, the table housed a variety of wings from ranging heats, and all the sides expected: corn, rolls, celery and carrots. Images of Commons and McEwen were quickly dispelled and replaced by the reality of free takeout food. While wings may not be the natural pairing to a rather classy night of cocktails (mock, of course) and painting, there were no complaints from the crowd. The lucky students filled their plates with everything above, making careful note to separate the food from the art. Once hands had been covered in barbecue sauce and every other delicious food, the group switched to the paintbrushes at hand instead. Mixing palettes allowed students to tap into their true inner artistry, combining their own paint colors and creating the masterpiece of their dreams.

Looking around, the canvases boasted everything from renditions of impressionistic art to sunsets, and patterns that could be on a school poster. The paint and sip turned out to be an exceptional activity because afterwards students could put their masterpieces in their room or on the Bundy walls. This event was perfect for those who never had time to re-tape last year's posters or have not gotten around to pillaging the pages of Redbubble. Sometimes DIY is the best way to decorate, and hopefully, Bundy's walls are now covered in the bright colors and calming pictures of the night's activities.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

Paint and Sip took place at the Bundy Cafe and Lounge.

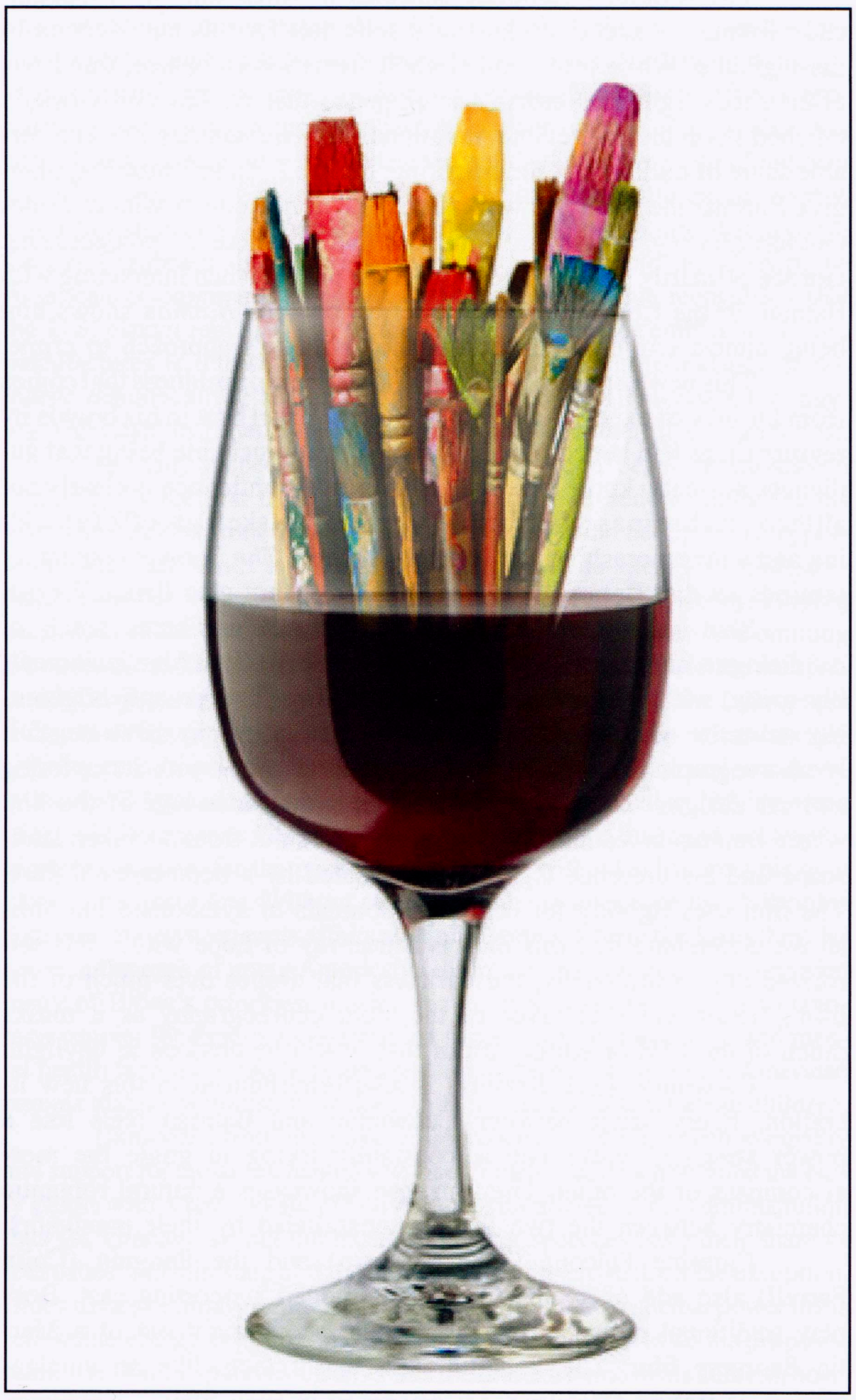

PHOTO COURTESY OF QUIGGLY'S CLAYHOUSE

Students had the freedom to choose thier own subjects to paint.

Athlete of the Week: Eva Abel '22

by Sam Dils '22
SPORTS EDITOR

The Hamilton women's lacrosse team got its season off to a terrific start, taking down nationally-ranked #19 Amherst in a 7-5 win at home on Steuben Field this past weekend. Though the final winning margin was tight, the team led wire-to-wire, leaving no doubt and asserting themselves as a team sure to be in the national conversation for women's lacrosse. One of the keys behind the win was the performance of senior captain Eva Abel '22. Her three goals all came in the second half, securing the win and staking her claim as a potential top scoring threat within the NESCAC. *The Spectator* sat down with Abel after the win to discuss the team's performance and their hopes for the season as they take their 1-0 record into NESCAC play after the strong opening weekend.

How does it feel to start the season with a huge home NESCAC win over a ranked Amherst team?

It feels awesome. Coming out that strong in our first game, in what the score might not show as a dominating win, is huge for a NESCAC battle.

What were some of the keys to earning the win this weekend?

Our defense definitely won the game for us on Saturday. Holding Amherst to only five goals by causing turnovers, forcing bad shots and playing solid defense got us fired up on attack and let us pull ahead for the win.

How have you and your fellow teammates helped prepare this year's team for the start of the season? How has the team come together over the fall and through preseason?

On top of all of the conditioning, lifting and practicing, we have been working hard to train our minds to be ready to win big this season. Our motto this year is "why not us," and we are ready to put the NESCAC and the NCAA on alert. We aren't going to let ourselves play scared against the NESCAC "powerhouses" who are favored to win, because why not us?

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSH MCKEE

Abel '22 leads an attack for the Women's Lacrosse team.

You have another tough test this weekend heading to Maine to face Bowdoin. What are your hopes for the trip?

Playing away after two home games will be a test of our ability to bring our energy with us 400 miles away. I know we'll rise to the challenge and show Bowdoin what we're made of.

What is this team capable of accomplishing this year? What goals are in reach?

Right now, we're just taking it one game at a time. That being said, we want to win game after game so we have the opportunity to compete in the NESCAC championship and get an NCAA bid.

Lightning Round

Go-to gameday meal?

Carbs and H2O.

Song/artist on your personal pregame playlist?

Whatever's blasting in the locker room ("Outta Your Mind" by Lil Jon and LMFAO)

Teammate with a secret talent?

Emmy Goodwin '22's not-so-secret Shakira impression

Favorite athletic memory from Hamilton?

Our overtime win against Trinity last season

March 10, 2022

Gambling on integrity: the consequences of professional sports betting

by Patrick Cleary '25
SPORTS CONTRIBUTOR

May 14, 2018: the Supreme Court is about to rule in the case of Murphy v. NCAA, whether or not New Jersey had the right to legalize sports gambling. In a 7-2 verdict, the court sided with New Jersey, opening the door to legal betting on the state level. This decision would change the trajectory of sports for the coming decade. As old concerns clash with new technologies and leagues scramble for revenue following a global pandemic, a central question emerges: does gambling threaten the integrity of the game?

We got an answer just this week after news broke that Atlanta Falcons wide receiver Calvin Ridley would be suspended for the entire 2022 season. This was after he placed multiple bets, including on his Falcons while away from the team. Ridley placed his bets, from a personal device in Florida. He was only caught because he used Hard Rock, an official NFL partner. Had he used a VPN or unofficial site, the story may never have broken.

Concerns regarding cheating tied to gambling are nothing new in professional nor collegiate sports. In the 1978-79 season, players on the Boston College Men's Basketball team were bribed to shave points, meaning they intentionally won by a specific margin in order to satisfy a bet. Would-be Hall of Famer Pete Rose was banned from Major League Baseball in 1989 after it was revealed he gambled on games while managing the Cincinnati Reds. In 2007, NBA referee Tim Donaghy resigned after an FBI investigation proved Donaghy had bet on games he officiated, resulting in a 15-month prison sentence.

These examples show that it does not matter if it is a player, a coach or a referee: this has all happened before, and the NFL was in the right to suspend Ridley. But trouble is still on the horizon. Whether we like it or not, we live in a sports gambling world now, and that raises serious questions for lawmakers, leagues and media members.

Since the Supreme Court ruling, 29 states and Washington, D.C. currently allow some form of betting. In some, people can place bets via smartphone, and many states are looking to expand. It is an attractive prospect that opens tax revenues for ailing state governments after a brutal hit from two years of the recent pandemic. However, it also raises ethical questions about addiction and the power of lobbying as betting companies consolidate and wield greater power year by year.

Similarly, sports leagues also see opportunity in legalized betting. As recently as 2017, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said of the practice, "I think we still strongly oppose legalized sports gambling. The integrity of our game is No. 1. We will not compromise on that." Five years later, leagues are more ready than ever to allow and even encourage betting on games. This includes the NFL. For example, NPR projected that Americans would bet $7.6 billion on the last Super Bowl alone.

Each of the major leagues have signed various deals with betting partners that give them a cut of bets. Team owners such as Jerry Jones of the Dallas Cowboys, Michael Jordan of the Charlotte Hornets and Robert Kraft of the New England Patriots have invested in DraftKings. A clear conflict of interest has emerged that threatens the integrity of games. One might ask, "what about the media that's supposed to act as a watchdog for all this?"

No sports broadcast nowadays is complete without a betting commercial. Commercials are nothing new for sports broadcasts, but the gambling wave has now merged with sports media influencer culture. NBA Legend Charles Barkley signed a deal with Fanduel to become an ambassador for the company and now regularly offers betting tips on the popular *Inside the NBA* program alongside bashing current superstars. He is not alone. Countless others from Terry Bradshaw to Dave Portnoy have embraced the phenomena. A cottage industry of gambling shows and podcasts has emerged such as *Barstool Pick Em* and *Fox Bet Live*. This rise means that the same media entrusted to fairly report on leagues is now reliant on some of the leagues' biggest partners. That poses a threat to journalism. The next Calvin Ridley case might not get as much coverage if it hurts a sponsor.

The lesson here is not that we should return to the olden days where gambling is isolated to certain pockets of the country like Las Vegas or Atlantic City. Proponents of the recent trend would argue that legalization just allows for greater regulation for something that was happening anyway. That is true, but problems are inevitable, and leagues must be cautious if they want to prevent another Ridley situation. It demands responsibility on the part of leagues, and prioritizing integrity over short term profits. In other words, nothing will change, and this will be the first story of many.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NBC SPORTS

Falcons wide receiver Calvin Ridley's recent suspension for placing bets, including on the Falcons themselves, exposes the current state of sports gambling.